

*Editors Note: Louise first published the following blog post on the Huffington Post on December 12, 2012. At the time, the the Senate had passed a version of the Violence Against Women Act that included legal protections for all Americans. Meanwhile, the House Majority had passed a version of the Violence Against Women Act that, among other things, excluded members of the LGBT community and Native Americans, from legal protections under the law. Since the blog was originally authored, the 112th Congress has adjourned and the 113th Congress has been sworn in. In the new session of Congress, Louise is still fighting to pass a version of the Violence Against Women Act that protects ALL Americans, including members of the LGBT and Native American communities.*

### **Renew the Violence Against Women Act-- NOW!**

By. Rep Louise M. Slaughter

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-louise-slaughter/renew-the-violence-against\\_b\\_2285202.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rep-louise-slaughter/renew-the-violence-against_b_2285202.html)  
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Rape. Stalking. Verbal Abuse. Intimidation. These are not the words that the holiday season should bring to mind. But because Congress has so far failed to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), millions of Americans face the prospect of losing programs that help victims of domestic violence find safety and rebuild shattered lives.

One in every four women and one in every seven men [have experienced](#) severe physical violence in their lives, and

[stalkers victimize](#)

approximately 5.2 million women and 1.4 million men each year. When I joined with a bipartisan coalition to write and pass VAWA in 1993, a woman was raped every six seconds, and a female was beaten every 15 seconds.

As we sat down to write the law, it was clear that something needed to be done. The results since then show that our actions have saved lives. Since VAWA was signed into law, more than one million women have used the justice system to obtain protective orders against their batterers, and cases of domestic violence [have dropped](#) by 67 percent.

Despite the very real impact of VAWA, this year Congress has failed to reauthorize the law. As I write, the protections that have prevented millions of cases of domestic violence are at risk.

Instead of simply and quickly reauthorizing a law that has saved lives, some in Congress decided to put politics first. They opposed an updated version of VAWA because the updated version would expand protections for the LGBT community, Native American populations and immigrant communities.

Excluding communities of people from protection under VAWA is not only dangerous, but morally wrong. Many of these communities are among the most likely populations to face the threat of domestic violence. For example, statistics gathered by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network reveal that [thirty-four percent of Native American women](#) are victims of attempted or completed rape -- a figure far higher than any other demographic group.

We should be providing more protections to victims of domestic violence, not denying assistance to those most in need. Fortunately, like-minded Members of Congress are fighting hard to overcome the extremists who stand in our way. Yesterday, [I led a coalition of 120 colleagues](#) -- including many prominent Republicans -- to demand our Congressional leaders reauthorize an *inclusive* and *comprehensive* VAWA as soon as possible.

In an age where gridlock and partisanship seem to rule the day, our bipartisan coalition believes we can succeed in passing a bill that protects **every victim** of domestic violence. For no matter our differences on issues like the fiscal cliff, there is no disagreement when it comes to saving lives.

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